

ENGLISH SECTION

# GUAM-SAIPAN

NEWS

JUNE 25 - JULY 1, 1993 • VOL. 3 No. 8

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**Guam-Saipan Balita**

# NMI hopeful on 702 funding after raising minimum wage

by Rafael I. Santos

SAIPAN-The Commonwealth of Northern Marianas government, bowing to pressure from the US Congress, has finally come out with a minimum wage law, sending signals to Congressional leaders that local leaders were "committed to reforms."

Senate Bill No. 8-146 better known as the Minimum Wage and Hour Act was initiated Wednesday by Acting Governor Benjamin T. Manglona during which he commended the members of the legislature and the Governor's Minimum Wage Task Force for their action on the measure.

"Without the unity and cooperation between the two branches, and also the... cooperation... of the House and the Senate and our business community, this legislation would not become a reality," Manglona said in his transmittal letter to the legislature.

At the same time, Manglona appealed to legislators to pass two other pending pieces of legislation to show to Washington that "we are taking positive action in meeting their concerns." In doing so, he is optimistic that Congressional leaders will respond posi-

tively and act on the 702 funding which the CNMI badly needs.

"All of us leaders understand that we need to begin addressing some of our reform issues," the acting governor said. Senate President Juan S. Demapan repeated Manglona's call for a speedier action by both houses of the legislature on the two reform bills. These are the bills on labor and developers' tax.

Senate Bill No. 8-146, which was approved on Tuesday, raises the minimum wage from \$2.15 to \$2.45 per hour. An increase of 30 cents will take effect every year until 1996, to match the US hourly rate of \$4.24.

With the approval of the bill, the government is hopeful that the indigenous people would be attracted to work in the private sector, better-skilled foreign workers will become available and the burden of an increased cost of living will be eased.

Manglona said the signing of the measure was a fulfillment of the promise of the local government in last year's Oversight hearing in Washington to introduce reforms.

"We hope that with our ac-



Acting Governor Benjamin Manglona signs the Minimum Wage and Hour Act as Senate President Juan Demapan looks on.

tion, the US Congress would look more favorable to our 702 funding," Manglona said.

The 702 funding is still in limbo as Congressional leaders await "favorable actions" on the part of the CNMI.

Public Law No. 8-21 also provides for the creation of Wage and Salary Review Board which will monitor economic conditions and make a comprehensive study of the impact of the minimum wage issues in the commonwealth.

Members of the board will include the Directors of Finance and Commerce and Labor and the Governor's Special Assistant for Planning and Budgeting and representatives from the private and business sectors.

## Painting as bread and butter

ALTHOUGH well-known in Manila's art circles for his personal style, creating a new type of impressionism, Ephraim Samson showed in the recent Filipino Artist exhibit at the Pacific Star Hotel on Guam that he has varied skills and other styles of painting.

He brought over for the exhibit some of his impressionistic works that were closer to realism.

"The ones I usually do in Manila are round forms with heavy texture...I was told art was still developing here and it might be better to bring my water colors that were more realistic...I didn't bring the ones that I really do at present."

Since high school, Samson

was already interested in the arts. He entered college pursuing a fine arts degree. The degree never materialized as he had to drop out because of financial difficulties.

To support himself, Santos went into commercial art creating cinema cartels.

"That's where I got used to doing portraits. Then I entered competitions and won some major prizes, until I was able to do an exhibit. It went on from there..."

And went on it did for the now popular local artist. Samson has had his works viewed by public audiences in international venues including Taipei, Hong Kong, Spain, and the US.

The exhibit, particularly in

Europe, also included a lesson for the artist.

"In Spain, the realists were already good. So they were looking for something typically oriental. If you bring like something cubism, they won't even look at it," Samson observed. "There you need to have your own style that's oriental."

Santos said art in the Philippines is maturing and continually evolving.

"Nowadays, because of the influx of many books and the teaching of fine arts is mature enough, we are able to produce international caliber painters... Even the art collecting in Manila

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Ephraim Samson (center, foreground) with four other known Filipino artists who held an exhibit of their works from June 12-16 at the Pacific Star Hotel on Guam.

# Saipan Cable's anniversary a success says its manager

FRED Lord, General Manager of Saipan Cable TV has announced that the Saipan Cable TV 17th anniversary celebration held last Saturday, Jun 19, was a "tremendous success." The theme of the anniversary party was "The World That Matters To You." According to Lord, more than a thousand people turned out to listen to music from Riptide and Condition 4 from Guam, and I Don't Know and High Energy from Saipan. A special treat was a brief appearance and performance by local singer and songwriter J.D. Crutch.

One of the more spectacular events of the evening was the dramatic drop of flame tree flowers from a helicopter flying low over Kilili Beach at sunset.

Acting Governor Benjamin T. Manglona made reference in his remarks to the several "firsts" that Saipan Cable TV is responsible for such the first cable TV system on Saipan, the first color television programming, the first live news and live election coverage, the first live coverage of the Midnight Mass as well as the first live satellite programming with ESPN and CNN. Manglona presented Saipan Cable TV President Lee M. Holmes with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Governor and Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas.

The climax of the six-hour event were the announcements by the Saipan Cable TV that, effective July 1st, all Saipan Cable TV subscribers will receive the Disney Channel, free of charge, for a three month period.

It was also announced that Saipan Cable TV will be the exclusive affiliate in the Commonwealth for FOXNET, bringing programming such as the popular Simpsons, Beverly Hills 90210, Martin, Married

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with Children and others to the people of Saipan and Tinian.

Company President Lee Holmes also announced the debut of "Karaoke Live" on Saipan Cable TV. Starting in early July, "Karaoke Live" will give subscribers an opportunity to call in and request their favorite karaoke songs on the Karaoke Channel.

The anniversary celebration was emceed by Jeff Evans and Ray Gibson of Guam Cable TV and Guam's 10 Radio 100 along with Saipan Cable TV Bingo Bonanza's Brad Cleven and Captain Pat of Hot 98 FM. Sponsors of the event include Hot 98 FM, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Nino's, World Tour and Travel and the Live L.A.

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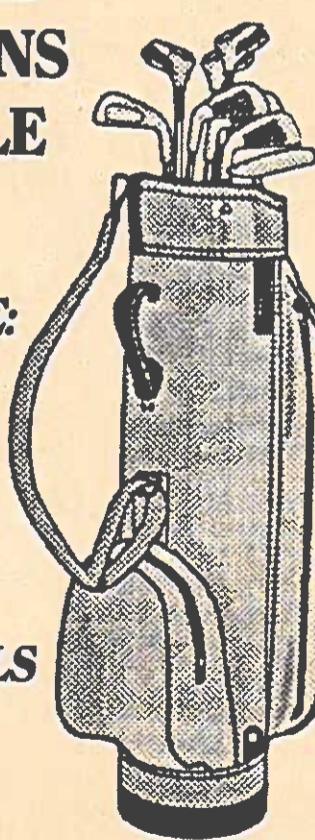
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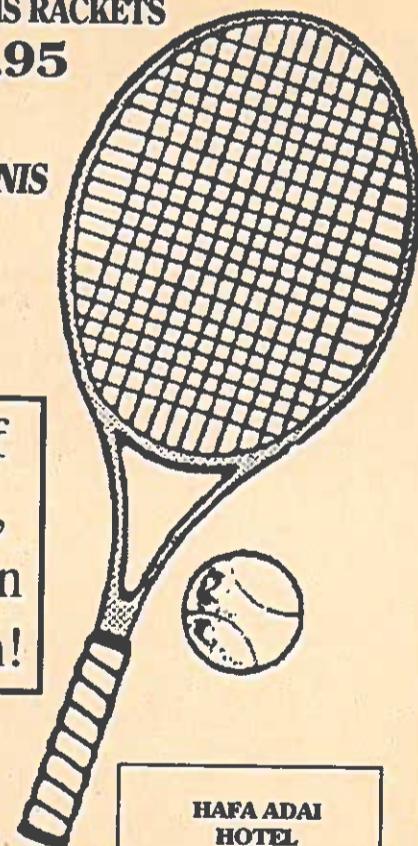
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